

February 3, 2014

Good Afternoon Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Barbara Rush and I live at 720 Holter in Helena. I stand before you today to ask you to consider holding hearings to determine why the State Board of Education has put Montana under a Mandate of Common Core.

Common Core is now being written into our district curriculums. Helena recently adopted a Common Core aligned English Language Arts Curriculum. In first grade students will identify reasons an author gives to support points in a text. They will compare and contrast two texts on the same topic. All of this and more before they can even read. You could ask kindergartners to do calculus too. This is not rigor; this is having student's waste valuable time that they should be using to accomplish the very difficult task of learning to read. They will spend time talking about things they know nothing about instead of doing the very difficult receptive reading tasks. The idea of the validity and value of their opinions will be inflated.

By the time they reach high school students will be analyzing the Preamble to the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence for rhetoric and evaluating the Bill of Rights. This will be done in English class with a teacher who is not even accredited to teach American History. I question whether students who are sixteen and seventeen years old have the knowledge, maturity, and historical background to fairly analyze our national documents. Teachers who are opposed to our constitution can easily manipulate their subjects. Instead of protecting and defending our Constitution they can easily break down the natural loyalty that our children feel for these documents.

The counter culture movement was successful in changing many state constitutions in the 70's; Montana's constitution was changed in 1972. Those changes put in nebulous language such as "good schools" leaving the courts to determine what the term "good schools" means, taking control over funding decisions from the legislature and putting it in the courts. It is not a stretch to think that students who are nurtured to inflate the validity of their opinions, and then analyze our national documents without proper information and background, might become adults who would be ready to change our national constitution. This should be taken very seriously, when our national constitution is open to be changed the protection of our rights and the strength and stability of our country will be in jeopardy.

Common Core was written behind closed doors and forced on states through state boards of education. There is no research or data to support their inflated claims of rigor and college and career ready. Many states are having terrible results from Common Core at this moment. Testing in New York last year was a nightmare causing even the teachers union to protest. Thirty thousand teachers in Florida have organized to stop Common Core.

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Exhibit 5

It is not surprising that Common Core has political agendas. National curriculums inevitably come to these results. We are the United States so that states rights can be protected, and education is one of our states rights. Part of our freedom comes from states rights and the excellence that comes from the competition of ideas among these states. Make Montana free to choose what is working well in other states and to reject what is repugnant, untested and ineffectual. Take away this mandate over Montana's education and release our children from this huge experiment. Preserve our right to protect and defend the constitution instead of leading our young students to undermine their faith in it.